

JOE COLEMAN



THE

MYSTERY OF

495¢
7951 CARL

WOOLVERINE WOO-BAIT





JOE COLEMAN is best known today as a visionary painter whose work has been exhibited around the world. He was born in 1955 in Norwalk, Connecticut, where he was raised Irish Catholic by a violent, alcoholic father and a mother who was excommunicated from the church the year before he was born. Unpredictable danger and the need to survive were the constant themes of his youth and continue to surface in Coleman's work today as expressions of what he calls "the holiness of violence and suffering."

This comic book was originally self-published by Joe Coleman in 1982 in a limited, oversized 11" x 14" edition of 2,000. It is extremely rare today, never reprinted until now, despite being one of the great post-underground comics of all-time, a multi-layered mystery that rewards multiple re-reading. For this new edition, we have added a "bonus track": the six-page short story "Highway," originally published in *Bizarre Sex* #6 (1977, Kitchen Sink Press). "Highway" picks up right where *Woo-Bait* leaves off, and the two pieces are conjoined here for the first time. This is the only solo comic book of Coleman's eclectic career as a painter, cartoonist, actor, performance artist, archivist, etc., yet it proves him to be one of the artform's most idiosyncratic and inspired practitioners. "The Mystery of Woolverine Woo-Bait" is a complex story, a filtered narrative in which things happen simultaneously and characters appear and reappear in different time periods and contexts. The disjointedness perfectly matches the subject matter: Coleman uniquely uses the medium of

comics to approximate the way in which schizophrenics manipulate their environs with symbols (see "Clues to the Mystery" on page 34). Each page is intricately designed as both a single unit of visual art as well as a piece of the story's larger puzzle. The symbology within the narrative permeates the artwork, blending form and content seamlessly. Coleman's dense visual technique expertly suits his fractured narrative voice and overtly psychological story, showcasing ornate, intricately composed pages executed in a highly textured style, obsessively cross-hatched and stippled, occasionally framing an old horror movie still (usually of the B-movie icon, Ronda Hatton – who else could it be besides perhaps Tor Johnson or Vampira, both of whom also make appearances?). The result is a mindbending menagerie of grotesqueries both real and imagined, a sophisticated and horrific mystery that uses the form of comics in ways that remain as conceptually innovative today as they were 22 years ago. We are proud to present this new edition. If you've enjoyed it, we hope you will also enjoy his upcoming collection of true crime illustrated stories, *Muzzlers, Guzzlers & Good Yeggs*, coming in early 2005.

— THE EDITOR



Photograph by Alex Zedman

Professor Momboozoo (Joe Coleman), blowing up at The Red Fox, New Jersey, 1977.

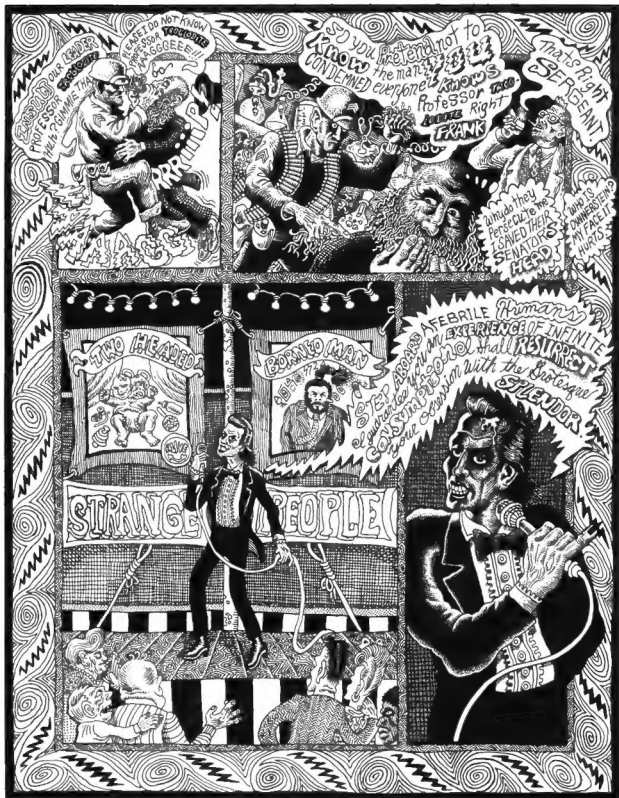






GET THIS HEAD TO SECTOR C AND HAVE IT PUT IN A SOLUTION OF Z-14 AND B-14

GIVE MR. DIMMERSTEIN HIS REWARD SERGEANT







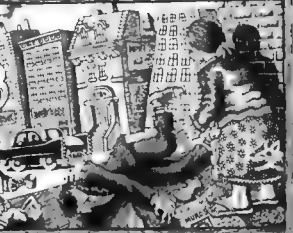
I KNOW I KNOW I KNOW FRANK I KNOW



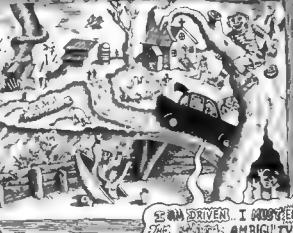
BUT WHAT ABOUT ME FRANK? AM I TO LIVE IN A LIFE OF THE REST OF MY LIFE?



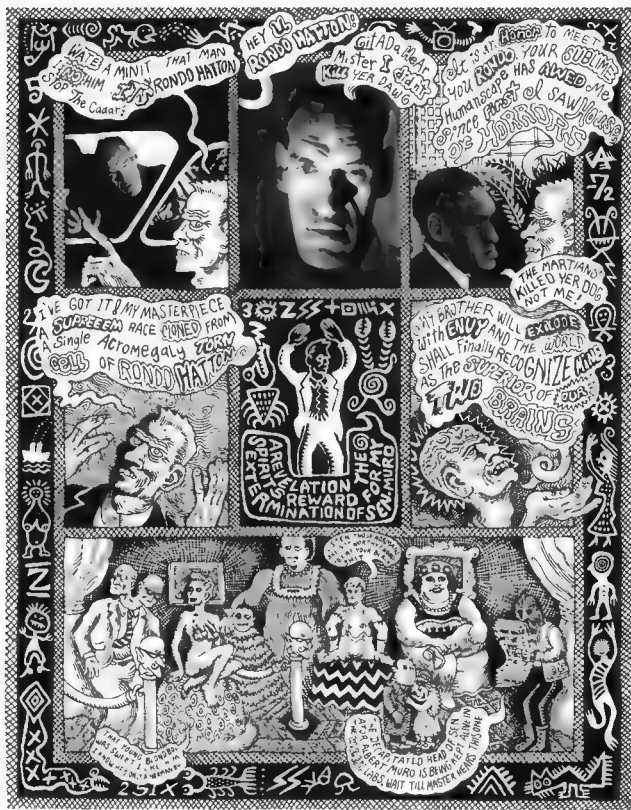
NO SENATOR. I HAVE OTHER PLANS. SO YOU BUT FIRST WE MUST FIND YOU A BODY



NOW THAT THE SENATOR ENROLLMENT FOR THE SENATOR IS COMPLETE MY PERCEPTION! GILLS WILL BLEED AGAIN



SOON DRIVEN. I MUST ELIMINATE THE AMBIGUITY AND THERE IT IS! UNDER THE SIGN OF THE SENATOR



GRAND STATE OF TEXAS

YOU ARE RIGHT TO DO THIS
UNLIKE MANY OF MY EXPERIMENTS
I AM BORN

SENATORS
HEAD KEPT
ALIVE

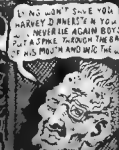
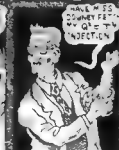
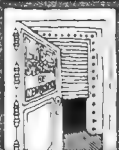
YOUR NEWS
SENATORS
HEAD KEPT
LIVE

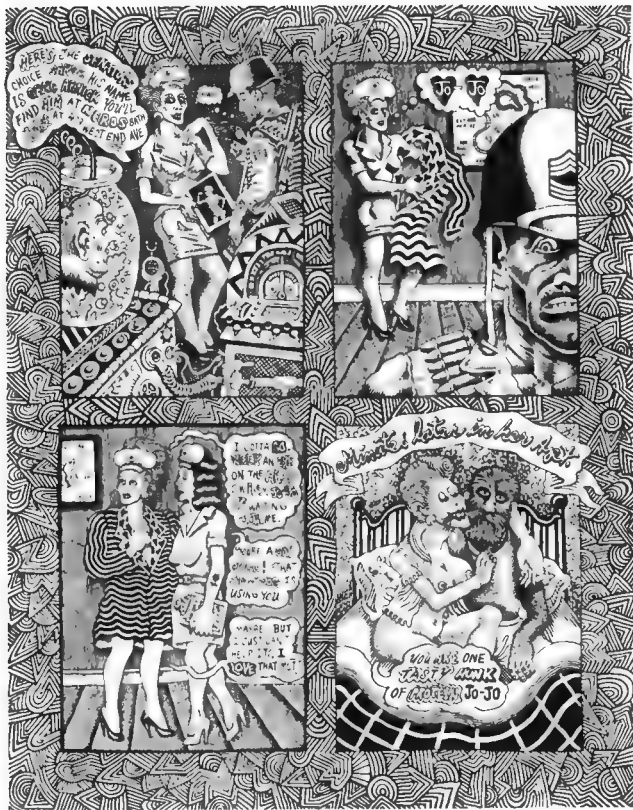
VITAL AD
on my Grand G
JUD

1917 and 1918
IN SOLA

SUZIEBELL









I MUST ASK
YOU SOMETHING



NOT AGAIN JO-JO. HASN'T
THAT FAGGOTS MASTER OF
GOTTEN ENOUGH OF OUR
GEEK SHOWS



SENATOR
MURDO'S HEAD



OH ALRIGHT JO-JO
WHICH ONE IS IT THIS TIME?



I WAS A FINE
YOU WOULD SA
THAT LOVER
WOULDN'T YOUR
MASTER SETTLE
FOR A DOUBLE
BODIED PLUTU
NIUM ZOMBIE.

IT MUST
BE THE
SENATORS
HEAD



YOU KNOW I COULD NEVER
RESIST YOUR LINEAR CHARM
MY SWEET HAIR PIE





CAKE OR BAK

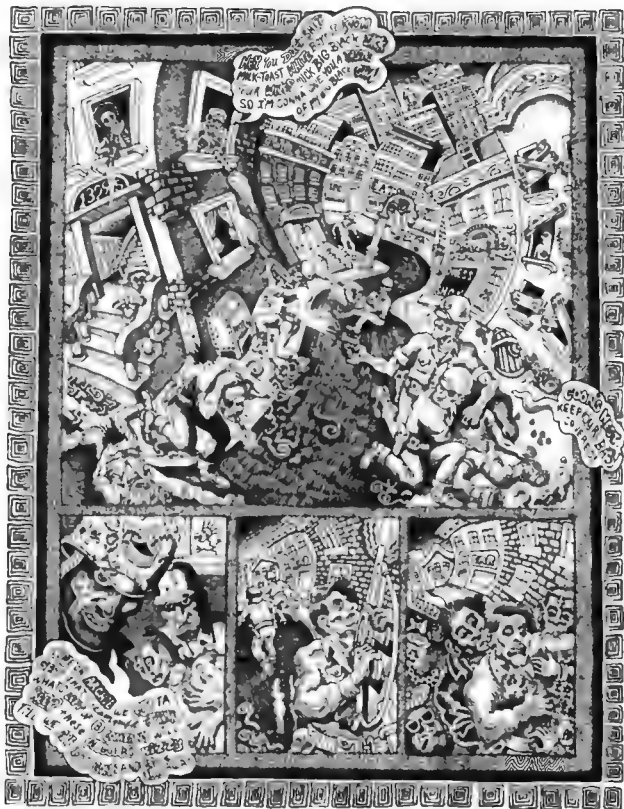
WITH BOYS HAVE
WITH US TO
THEN AS GO TA
TO US TO

HERE'S THE FRU
CAKE NOW MAY
COMPANY PUT THE
LUNCH-HOOKS ON
THE FRENCH
PASTRY

WINTER HAS GRANTED
OUR BOON WE SENDS THE
DEAD TO OUR DOOR
THE MIDNIGHT JARRISON

THE PROTEST
FOR THE DIA
HOW E-ARMED
KISS OF VAMP
ASS GOD ARE

LEROY'S
INFERNO







WE INTERRUPT OUR NORMAL PROGRAM
WITH THIS SPECIAL REPORT
THE HEAD OF "SAN VARIABLE"
SENATOR ALBANO, WHICH WAS
RECENTLY IDENTIFIED IS TO
UNDERGO TRANSPLANT
SURGERY THIS EVENING AT THE
C.C.E.B. LABS



QUIET HERE
ARCHIE I THINK WE'RE
OUT OF THE JUNGLE

AHHH... WHO ARE
YA TALKIN' ABOUT ARCHIE

HEY SARGE I BEEN THINKING
IT FARK ATTAKES SENATOR
WURO'S HEAD TO THE MONS ABOUT
WONT UHA MAKE THE SENATOR A MONS

SENTP... HERE ENOUGH
GARDIN... Pansier...
AS IT IS... THE...
THE ENTIRE

SO WHAT DO YA WANT ME
TO DO ABOUT IT. I'M JEST
TALKIN' ORDERS SARGE
AS YOU

WE LIVE IN A...
FOR THE RIGHT GUY IN POL...
OUT ALL THE...
INJECTING IT SOMEONE...
SOMEONE LIKE YOU

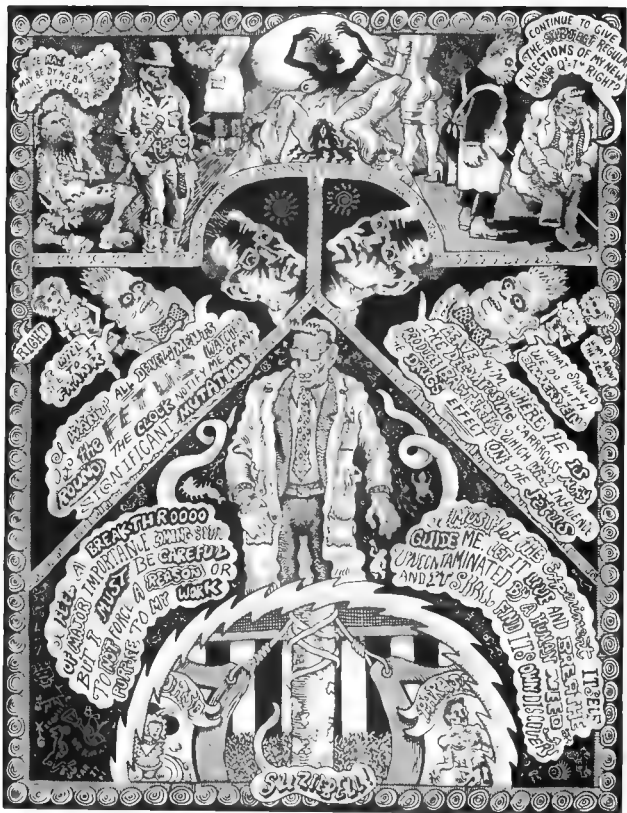
I CAN NEVER
GET...
P... OFF... ARCHIE

ALL... WANTED WAS A...
BODY IF WE WAS TO BRING IN A BODY
WITHOUT A HEAD WHO'S TO PAY...
NOT... ARCHIE... QUEER?

YOU WANT...
AN ELECTION SARGE

NO ARCHIE

YOU MAKE A WINE SENATOR



CONTINUE TO GIVE
THE ~~SUBJECT~~ REGULAR
INJECTIONS OF MY NEW
"SUZIEPEN" RIGHT?

MAY BE DYING BUT
I'LL LIVE ON
MAY BE DYING BUT
I'LL LIVE ON

RIGHT
WILL TO IT
FINDS

ALL DEVELOPMENTS
WATCH
NOTIFY ME OF ANY
THE CLOCK
SIGNIFICANT MUTATION

WANT SHOWED
WE DO WITH
"SUZIEPEN"
HAVE BEEN WHERE HE IS
THE DEBILITATING "CARRIOUS" JOBS
POSSIBLE EFFECTS WHICH ARE INFLUENT
THE DRUGS EFFECT ON THE SEVERE

LET A BREAK-THROOOO
OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE BRING SOME
BUT I MUST BE CAREFUL
TO NOT FORCE A REASON OR
PURSUE TO MY WORK

GUIDE ME, LET IT WORK AND BE THE
UNCONTAMINATED BY A BURNING JOBS
AND 27 JOBS, END THE OWN LIBRARY
ITSELF

SUZIEPEN

My every thought is soon
deep within the folds of
your haunting memory



I remember -
the first time
I saw you Your
Magic swallowed
My soul

Then I saw
him Your first
lover He owned
the store. But he
was my slave



ADDICTION

I was
doomed

GUY running away
to GARY AND BEAT
HE SAID STERILIZED



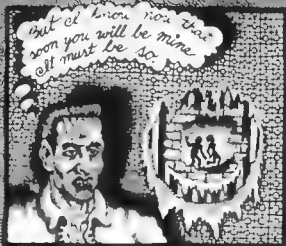
The night the leech boys touched him
so they could have you



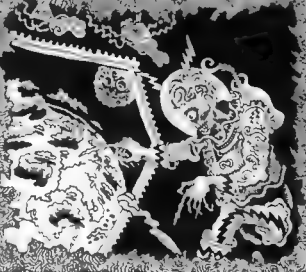
Yes you've had many lovers since then, and
you've seen much of the world:



But el know now that
soon you will be mine
It must be so



FOR A LITTLE WHILE HE WANTS
TO GO AT THE END OF THE LARS
AND BRING HIM TO
HIS NEW HOME



NOW WE MUST BE OFF
TO PLUCK THE STRAW
FROM MY BROTHER'S NEST

RIGHT I'LL
GET THE CAR
STARTED

WE SHRT. HAVE
HARRIED MY MIND.
I SEE THINGS AS IF FOR
THE FIRST TIME.

UMBILICAL GREEN
COCOONS
4 X 2 1/2 3 4 5

FEED PLEASE
DUVE GOT TO
AY IN CONTROL.

CONTROL? WHY EVEN NOW
MY SOUL'S INTEREST IS GLUT-
TONOUSLY DIGESTING A
FULL COURSE MEAL OF
COSMIC REVELATIONS

LOMA
TER IT
TIME TO
GO NOW

STAY
A-HM

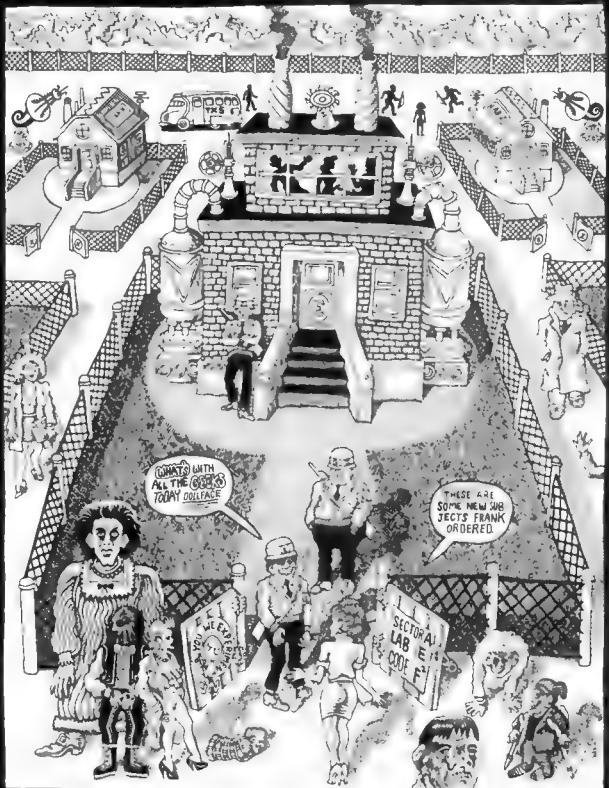
THEN WE
ARE OFF

SCHWABEL

WOW LONG NOW
SARGE

LET ME HOLD
HER NOW JAKE.
PLEASE.

THANKS JAKE
I'LL BE GENTLE
HONEST I WILL



YOU HAVE CLEAR-
ANCE PAPERS FOR
THESE MUTANTS MY
SWEET HONEY DEW

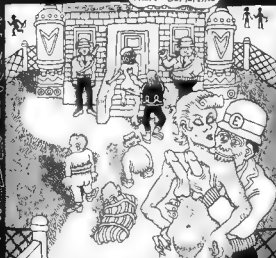


SORRY SOLDIER I
MUST HAVE LEFT
THEM SOMEPLACE

YOU KNOW THE
RULES DOLL NO
ENTRANCE WITHOUT
THOSE PAPERS



I WANT
20 M. MUTES
WITH THE WELL
HUNG MOO-MOO
SNATCH



OF THIS
MUTAGEN AGENT

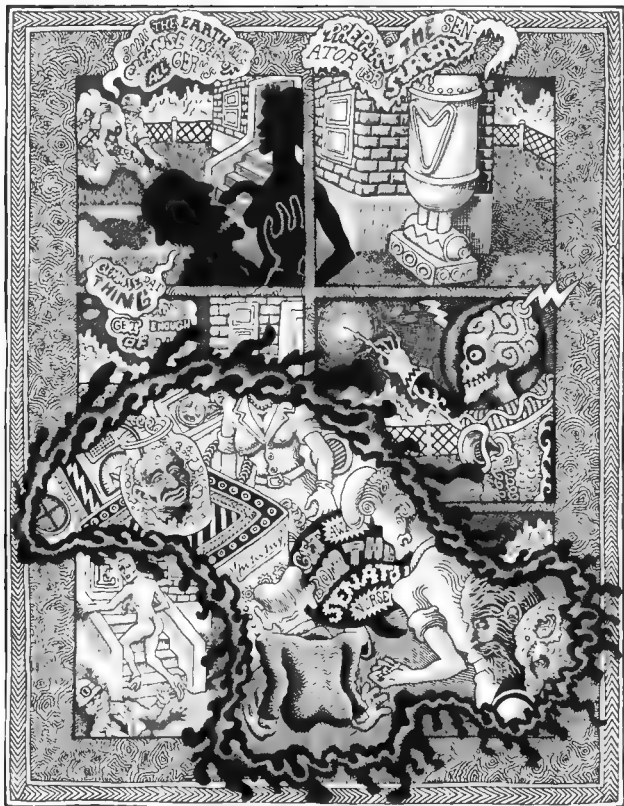


YOU SHOULD HAVE HAMSTRUNG
THE ROMAN'S GONADS
WHILE I HAD THE MARE



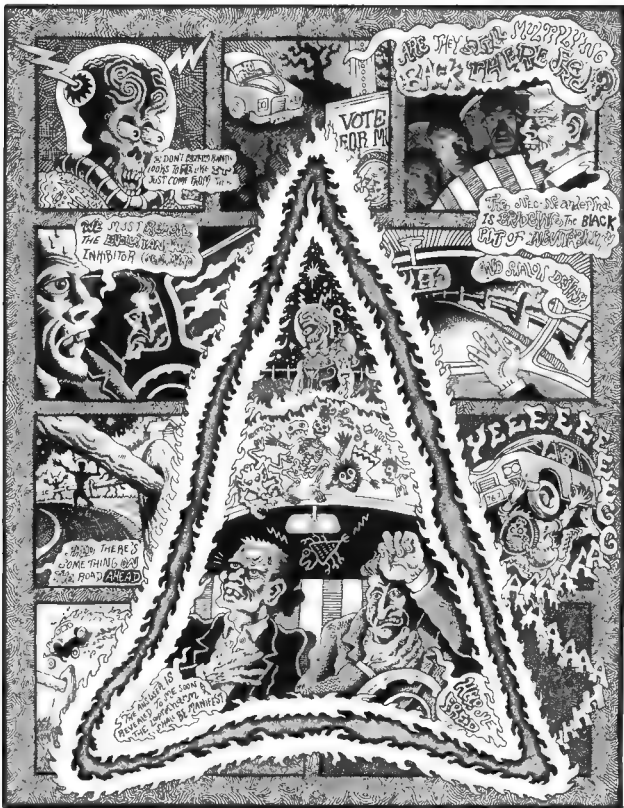
THEY ARE FORCING THEIR BODIES TO ACCEPT THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE NEW WORLD. SOME WILL DIE OF CANCER WHICH IS AN UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT AT EVOLUTION. SOME OTHERS WILL DEVELOP A TOLERANCE OR ADAPT TO THE NEXT EVOLUTIONARY STAGE.











ME THEY SAY MZZZZING
BLACK THERE IS?

IS DON'T ASKED RAN
LOOKS TO ME: HE
JUST COME FROM

VOTE
FOR ME

THE NEW SPARKING
IS ~~THE~~ THE BLACK
CAT OF MEXICAN

WE MUST
THE
INHIBITOR

AND RAIN DOTS

THERE'S
SOMETHING ON
THE ROAD AHEAD

THE ANSWER IS
TO ME SOON A
REVEALED CONSPIRACY
THE 'COME BE MANIFEST

WHEEL
SPEED

ON HORROR! COULD I HAVE BEEN AMONG THE CHILDREN OF BETHANY ARE JEWS?

S R THE JEWS WE BURIED IN @ SECTOR HAVE ARISE FROM THEIR GRAVES



THEY HAVE CRASHED 100 PER METER X

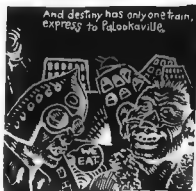
THEY ARE SHOOTING OUR TROOPS GUNS ARE USELESS ON DEAD MEN. THEY WANT SIR THEY WANT YOUR BALLS

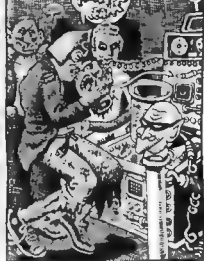
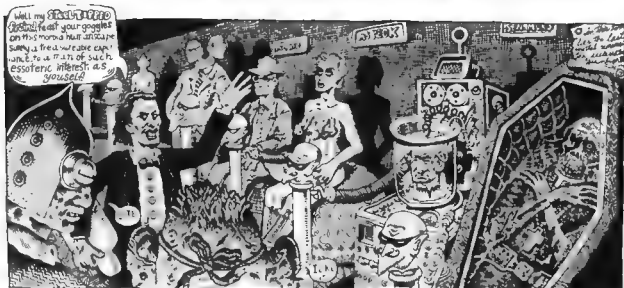
EVERYONE HAS SEEN FORTH HIS DEAD CHILDREN NOW WE WILL TAKE OUR RETRIBUTION

COME ON OUT JEWS IT IS TIME FOR YOU TO MEET THE BOMBERS RACE!



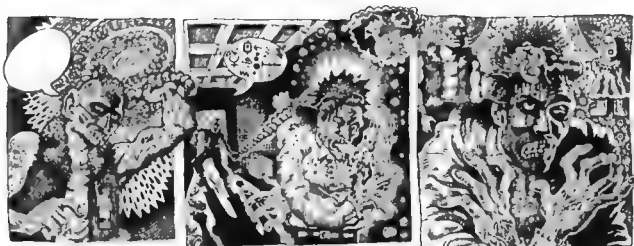






Please Sir, you must ~~help~~ me I have wealth and influence. I can get you... things if you aid me. I was kidnaped three months ago, my name is ALBERT MURK.







The genre of obsession
Like salvation
was all but dried up
what remained
Boiled to the surface
as cosmetic ulcers
there who survived
rest assured in ignorance
"The moment was ripe
for MIGHTY
highway."

END

CLUES TO THE MYSTERY

WORDS AND SYMBOLS

afebrile / a-fē-brīl / adj.: Average; uncharacteristic.

gezone / ge-zōn / n.: The twilight point between pre- and post-atomic.

haut / 'hōt / vb.: Strut; swagger.

highay / hīg-hā / n.: The final conflict.

human / 'hū-mən / n.: Unimpaired human.

paunch / pōnch / n.: The organization.

roman / rō-men / n.: Homosexual. Derived from the decadence of the Ancient Roman Empire.

W.E.F.Y. / wē-fē / n.: abbr. We Experiment For You. Code name for laboratory where Frank conducts his research.

woo-bait / wū-bāt / n.: Something fascinating and seductive used to lure, then entrap.

woolverine / wūl-ver-en / n.: Noted for his thievishness, strength, and cunning. He is the Beast referred to in The Book Of Revelations.

REOCCURRING SPIRITS



Leprecharm, fairy (homosexual), the spirit of a decadent empire.



The mushroom cloud.



The maze desires control of the post-atomic future.



The maze as explosion.



The maze as the fortress of the intestines.



Lightning rods of hate from war spirits.



The old world spirit unwilling to give up his hold.



Spirit of frustrated, unrequited love.



Zanti, Human head with insect body. (Possesses Fred and rivals for control of the post-atomic future with the maze.)

PEOPLE SECTION A

The persons referred to in this section represent Frank's conception of the psychological make-up required to survive or mutate in the post-atomic era. Their characteristics are: 1) lack of respect for moral and rational boundaries; 2) knowledge of, or blind faith in the occult; 3) a driven need to materialize the darkest desires of the subconscious; and 4) uncorrupted by any outside influence or ambition (e.g. Ivan the Terrible, Hitler).

Dale Nelson

This free-lance logger from British Columbia, went on a murder spree, killing eight people within an hour. One of whom, a seven year old girl, he ripped open from chest to groin, then thrust his mouth into her stomach to eat her undigested food. At the time of his arrest, he stated that he was "smashed on acid," but later retracted this statement. (p.8)

Peter Kürten

Kürten was a German mass murderer of innumerable men, women, and children. His earliest sexual experiences were having intercourse with goats, sheep, and pigs, while stabbing them. At the age of thirty, he went after human victims, often drinking their blood in a state of sexual frenzy. "I wonder if I will hear my own blood dripping," Kürten asked his executioner before he was beheaded. (p.8)

Albert Fish

Born in 1870 to a Washington, D.C. family with a history of mental abnormality, Fish had a sex life of unparalleled perversity. He practiced almost every known deviation, and performed many that were never documented. He was tormented by self-intoxication and depression. He attempted to purge himself of sin by torturing himself (x-rays showed twenty-nine needles which he inserted into his body—all in the genital region), and by torturing and sacrificing children, which he then ate. (p.8)

Edward Painsel

"The Bogeyman," A self-employed contractor and jobber gardener on the English Channel island of Jersey, in his spare time he practiced black magic, Satanism, and sexual perversion. Dressed in a grotesque costume which consisted of a nail studded coat, rubber mask, and fright wig, Painsel kidnapped children from their beds at night, subjected them to all kinds of obscenities, then returned them to their beds. The next morning, the frightened child would inform his parents that "the Bogeyman was here last night." (p.8)

SECTION B

The person referred to in this section embodies the physical characteristics required to survive or mutate in the post-atomic era, according to Fred.

Rondo Hatton

Hatton was a film actor afflicted with the disease acromegaly (chronic hyperpituitarism), which he acquired through exposure to chemical warfare in the trenches of World War I. The disease is characterized by progressive enlargement of the hands, feet, and face. (pp. 3, 10, 17, 31, 33)

SECTION C

Harvey Dinnerstein

Dinnerstein headed the review committee who labeled Professor Mombuzzoo fascist and schizophrenic, and then expelled him from the School of Visual Arts. (pp. 4, 5, 12, 20, 27)





FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS